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Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

GEORGE V. DENNY, JR., MODERATOR



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Is the Church Failing Our Youth?

Announcer:

Tonight we are broadcasting from the Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where we are the guests of the Christian Youth Conference of North America and station WLAV. Grand Rapids, the largest city in Western Michigan, is the furniture capital of America. Here in the city's largest auditorium, are assembled young men and women delegates from the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Alaska, Hawaii, Africa, and other countries.

The Christian Youth Conference of North America is sponsored by the United Christian Youth Movement which is composed of forty major Protestant denominations and youth agencies such as the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Girl and Boy Scouts and State Youth Councils.

America's Town Meeting is honored to open the first session of this conference which will last until noon on Sunday, September 7. Across the United States and

Canada, Youth Councils are gathered in radio studios to listen to this national broadcast, and will telephone their questions to Grand Rapids. After the program, these youth groups are planning to broadcast their opinions locally on tonight's subject, "Is the Church Failing Our Youth?"

Now, to preside over our discussion in the absence of George V. Denny, Jr., here is Clifton Utley, radio commentator, analyst on foreign affairs and former director of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Mr. Utley. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Utley:

Good evening, friends. This is a week of profound religious significance for the world, for our America. In Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, a World Council of Churches has just been formed for the first time in modern Christendom attended by representatives of most Christian faiths from most nations of the world.

Tonight here in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 5,000 young people are attending the United Christian Youth Conference representing more than 100 churches and coming from all parts of the United States and many other lands, too.

Tonight's Town Meeting is being broadcast from Grand Rapids Civic Auditorium as a part of the United Christian Youth Conference. I'm sure that when you hear the vigor with which these young church people question our speakers—and it would be even more true if you could be here, and see the exceptionally fine group of young delegates—I'm sure you would then sympathize with one of our speakers who is about to argue that the church is failing our youth. This speaker came up to me a moment ago and said, "After seeing this group, I'm beginning to think I'm on the wrong side of the question."

Now to our subject, "Is the Church Failing Our Youth?" Is religion losing its strength, or is there a rebirth of religion throughout America and the world?

What opportunities does the church offer young people for service?

Do young people take their church responsibilities seriously or do they consider the church, well, simply a center for social life?

Tonight, we have four speakers of profound religious conviction to discuss these and other issues

affecting the church and its relation to our young people. G. Dodds, holder of the world record for the indoor mile, has just been appointed student track coach at Wheaton College where he's received a degree of Master of Arts in church education.

Dr. Luther Wesley Smith, executive secretary of the Board of Education of the Northern Baptist Convention, is also chairman of the Board of Trustees of the International Council of Religious Education. Edward Hawley, former president of the National Pilgrim Fellowship, the National Youth Organization of the Congregational Christian Churches, spent two years in England as special consultant to the youth department of the English Congregational Churches.

Our first speaker, Miss Helen E. Storen, has had not only a distinguished educational career, but she is also an author and a member of the Board of Directors of the Educational Commission of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Miss Storen, who is Roman Catholic, is active in many civic, religious, and educational organizations, among them, the Corpus Christi Catholic Youth Forums in New York City, the Americans for Democratic Action and the Council for Community Action. Miss Storen is currently assistant Professor of Education at Queens College, New York. Now Miss Storen. (*Applause.*)

Miss Storen:

From my association with young people over the past fifteen years, I have become convinced that the church is failing youth on several counts. There are, of course, exceptions. Within practically every denomination there are individual parishes and church-sponsored schools and organizations that are doing a splendid job of preparing young men and women to function as religiously oriented citizens.

But the majority of our youth have pitifully few religious resources to call upon when they attempt to formulate values to guide their actions during these confusing times.

Many young people lack conviction regarding the major social problems of the day, and it seldom occurs to them to turn to religion for direction. Others follow uncritically a new idea or movement without thinking of examining it in terms of the religious principles they have been taught to profess.

The fact that religion does not serve as a continuously guiding force in the lives of many of our youth is due, at least partially, to the poor quality of our religious instruction, and I think Gil Dodds will agree with me on this.

Ray E. Baber of Pomona College, states in a recent article, that large numbers of college students know little or nothing about the tenets of the faith which they

nominally claim. Perhaps in our attempt to make religious education more palatable, we have taken all the meat out of it.

Students in our modern schools are accustomed to wrestling with difficult problems. There is no reason to believe that high-school-age youngsters cannot comprehend profound religious concepts if the methods of teaching are challenging. Yet, much of our religious instruction continues to be of a very superficial nature and the methods are frequently those which general education has long discarded.

If religious beliefs are to have lasting meaning, students must be encouraged to discuss, to question, to analyze, and to evaluate. We fail also, by not helping students see direct applications for their religious beliefs.

I am certain that all religiously trained youth give lip service to the concept of brotherhood. Still, in a recent study of attitudes of students in three of our best known colleges, students who had no formal religious instruction showed less prejudice toward minority groups than students who had attended church schools or Sunday schools.

Parochial schools, of course, have a distinct advantage over Sunday schools in the matter of time. However, they, too, need now to carefully appraise the content and method of their instruction in

terms of the religious literacy and the activity of their graduates. For those young people who have, at best, an hour or so a week of religious instruction, the chances of achieving a very fundamental understanding of religion is meager.

How can we remedy this? It has been suggested that the public schools give increased attention to the study of the major religions of the world. This would provide a background on which the individual faith could build.

In a recent report of the American Council on Education, the author states, "To leave religious education entirely to church and synagogues is in contrast to educational policy in other matters. To do this is to invite the same indifference to religion that we should expect to result in the political sphere from ignoring the institutions of government."

I agree with the report that certain educators have gone to the extreme when they suggest that schools avoid teaching about religion because it might cause sectarian strife. We do not, I hope, in our best schools avoid discussing political parties because there are both Democrats and Republicans in the community. (*Applause.*)

In addition to more complete and meaningful knowledge of his religion, youth needs to be provided with more opportunity for

experiencing the joy and satisfaction that comes from service. Too frequently we have all been guilty of putting the stamp of approval on individual competition and premium on financial success. If the church is ever to combat the extreme materialism of our present culture, she must give youth more chances to serve others.

I recently visited a small denominational college where students are required to spend time each year working in camps, community centers, hospitals, nurses' schools, and other service organizations. Such plans should be the rule rather than the exception.

Finally, I believe that the church will only succeed with youth if she takes more vigorous part in helping to shape the culture pattern of our society. If our divorce rate is not to continue in an upward trend, the church must develop new ways of helping to promote better family relationship.

More churches should provide family counseling services to their parishioners. More ministers should have extensive training in psychology and psychotherapy. The church must also take strong stands on social, economic, and political issues. (*Applause.*) All phases of man's life should be subject to the same moral sanction. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Utley:

Thank you, very much, Miss

Storen. In addition to his affiliation with the Northern Baptist Convention, our next speaker, Dr. Luther Wesley Smith, is a member of the boards of trustee of several colleges and universities. During World War II he served as chairman of the administrative committee of the Serviceman's Christian League, a united movement of all Protestant men in the armed forces. Dr. Smith. (*Applause.*)

Dr. Smith:

Miss Storen has stated why she believes that the church is failing our youth. I can agree with her that a majority of our American youth have too few religious resources for their personal guidances as individuals and as responsible members of society. Too many do lack conscience and convictions concerning the major social problems of our times.

But contrary to her implication, it is precisely the Christian Youth groups on the campuses and in the churches of our communities where one usually finds the conscience, leadership, and voices which are attacking, from unselfish and idealistic motives, these great moral social problems. (*Applause.*)

I have been on innumerable campuses from the Atlantic to the Pacific and it is my observation that it is the church, through its own youth, which is endeavoring to instill the moral Christian sensitivity needed to meet racial and

class prejudice, economic injustice, juvenile and adult delinquency, and family deterioration. In my judgment, the church is not failing in this matter.

I agree with Miss Storen that religion is not a matter which can be left entirely to church and synagogue, nor can it be ignored or omitted by the public schools, but it should not be implied that the church is failing at this point.

The whole expanding movement of week-day religious education, reaching as it does over two million American youths; the churches' program of vacation church schools and of summer camping is the important start the church has made to meet this need.

Furthermore, the churches across the land are now seeking through denominational, community, and state committees to find answers to the problem: How can the essential elements of our religious faith be taught in the public schools? That is, convictions which Jew, Protestant, and Catholics hold in common.

The church is seeking ways of presenting, in the public schools, faith in God, respect for the personality of the individual as the Child of God, and principles of right and wrong.

The fact is the churches of our land have served America and her youth more fully and effectively than most people realize. Two million Sunday school teachers de-

vote their labor, love, and learning each week to the task of teaching America's boys and girls concerning the essentials of the Christian faith. The character and integrity which Christian faith nurtures in a person is the very foundation of our democracy and institutions of soul liberty.

Nurturing character in growing persons, through teaching them the knowledge and love of Christ, is what the church is doing for millions of our American youth. Consider the more than two million youth who are at our summer camps and assemblies under Christian agencies being trained for Christian leadership in our land.

Ed Hawley will tell of the thousands of youth of college age who are out this very summer on Summer Service Projects in country and city, at home and abroad. Or consider the great student conferences and convocations sponsored by the churches throughout the course of the year—conferences such as this one tonight.

Young people, thousands of them, have caught their vision of what Christ would have them do and be through such conferences as this.

Typical of so many others are Dick and Ann Beers who sailed for Assam a year ago next month. They got their vision and call from just such a conference as this one which is opening tonight in Grand Rapids. They are now in Assam

dedicating their lives to the cause of nurturing and training Christian leadership for that land for tomorrow.

The United Christian Youth Movement of America, in which participate the youth of the major Protestant bodies, illustrates the fact that in facing their common past and responsibilities the Protestant churches in our country are vitally united and effective. Forty of these together have a common program of common objectives in Christian teaching, missions, and in other ways.

Increasing thousands of boys, girls, and youth, to say nothing of adults have been reached by the expanding, evangelizing ministries of the cooperating Protestant churches of this country linked together as they are in the teaching fellowship of the International Council of Religious Education and in the general church fellowship of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

Let it be said again and again that our churches are not perfect. They are not as earnest, not as Christ-like as we would wish and pray they might be, because there are so many frail human beings in them like you and me.

But how can one know the extent to which the church, ministering in vital and redemptive ways to the youth of America and through them to the world, can still maintain that she is failing our youth. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Utley:

Thank you, Dr. Smith. Now our third speaker, Gil Dodds, is known to sports lovers throughout the country and the world as the "Flying Parson" or the "Perambulating Pastor." He is a member of the First Brethren Church. It was extremely unfortunate for the United States that Gil Dodds suffered a pulled tendon during the Olympic tryouts, and so missed the opportunity of going to London. But we're all delighted to have him here with us in Grand Rapids tonight. Mr. Dodds. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Dodds:

We are always glad to note that the church is seeking new and better ways in which to meet the needs of the youth, as Dr. Smith has stated. We regret, however, Dr. Smith, that just because the church is attempting to do these things you cited, it is no adequate proof that it is meeting its needs.

The proof of a job well done is to be found in its end results. In this hour of world crisis, the young people of this bruised and bewildered generation need the Christian church more than ever before in history. Civilization has been shaken to its very foundation and appears to be collapsing.

Most sincerely do I wish that I could support honestly the position that the church is meeting adequately the needs of its youth, but I cannot do so. My viewpoint

may sound pessimistic at the moment, but it is realistic, based on the observation and reading.

During the past twelve months I have visited about 150 churches, and have spoken at over 200 youth meetings. I have conferred with several thousand young people who have come to me for counsel and help. I speak, therefore, from actual experience.

The youth of our land do feel that the church is failing to fully meet the needs. Statistics of church membership and blueprints for plans of action are inconclusive evidence.

What appears on paper may not exist in fact. For example, in 1939, numerous articles attempted to prove that there was no danger of aggression from Central Europe, because France had the very finest army in the world. France did on paper, but when the trial by fire came, the army was woefully inadequate, largely because the army had mediocre leadership, obsolete methods, and a wavering loyalty to the tri-color of France.

The church is failing by providing too few leaders. The preacher is expected to be an exceptional speaker, a master psychologist for counselling, a youth director, a neighborhood visitor, and a specialist in religious education. (*Applause.*)

We are living in an age of specialization. The church must cease to be a one-man organiza-

tion and it must provide more leadership to meet the varied demands of the church and the community. (*Applause.*)

We not only need more workers, but workers more adequately trained to meet their task. Dr. Smith stated that we have some two million Sunday school teachers across the land. We are not interested in numbers but quality. (*Applause.*)

This training that I have in mind cannot be merely gained at summer conferences. When the church becomes conscious of its responsibility to youth, it will insist upon the seminaries providing adequate departments of Christian education. This great oversight has allowed progressive education to undermine our cherished needed faith in the Changeless Book and the Changeless God.

What about the general level of training for the clergyman. Let me take the training of a Northern Baptist preacher, for example, since we have a representative of that fine group on a panel for the evening.

The following figures will show the extremely low average of the scholastic education held by Northern Baptist preachers: 31.9 per cent of the ministers have no college education; 40.7 per cent have no regular seminary; and the standard for ordination in the Northern Baptist Convention is supposed to be four years of college and three

years of seminary, with a minimum of two years of college and three years of seminary. Yet, 63 per cent of the ministers failed to meet the standard, and 48.1 failed to meet the minimum.

The church is also failing to recognize its obligation to minister to whole of the individual. The church, at large, has chosen to minister only to the religious part of the life and has neglected the other component parts of the person's whole. (*Applause.*)

Our lives are integrated wholes and unless religion is all of life it is none of life. The church must not only provide a place for worship, but also a place for fellowship and social life. (*Applause.*) I want my whole life to be ministered to by my church. I want my church to find my recreation inside rather than outside. (*Applause.*)

Many churches are, however, making steps toward family counseling, up-to-date recreational facilities, and wholesome social life.

We might also refer to the question of world issues. Young people must face political problems. The church can no longer remain mute upon the questions and expectations of young people to be satisfied. The church which has recognized the Bible as its authority, must realize that the Bible touches every phase of life.

The right and wrong of social issues should be clearly outlined

by the church, and the right and wrong of political issues should certainly not be side-stepped.

The church has failed its youth in not maintaining in secular education the vital principle that there can be no sound economic and material values without true spiritual values.

Without a protest, the church has allowed the establishment of secular educational standards which demand that our youth be taught pagan life and philosophies, which were powerless to stop the decay of the very life that formed it, but the Bible with its vital spiritual principles upon which the greatest nations on earth have been founded, runs the gauntlet of silence, ridicule, and denial in our secular schools. (*Applause.*)

Scientists and educators confess their failure, and, by implication, the failure of the church, when they coupled the explosion of the atomic bomb with the warning that education without regeneration is damnation, and that the only salvation of the world was in a return to those spiritual ideals and emphases which our fathers wrote into their documents of school and state.

The church at large has failed to challenge the best that is within us. To do this, the church must hold before us the sinless life in Christ Jesus. This will send us back to the Bible to find a way in which we can live also like him.

The challenge of a new birth will then uphold all, causing us to forsake all for Him. It holds before us the world's greatest sacrifice, namely, the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross for the sin of the world. We, as young people, want the message of salvation through the Christ of the Cross. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Utley:

Thank you, Gil Dodds. Now our final speaker, Edward Hawley, who is a student at the Federated Theological Schools of the University of Chicago, and, like Gil Dodds, has been speaking to young people all over our country. He began his religious work in his home church at Hart, here in the State of Michigan, and became leader of the State Pilgrim Fellowship, and later president of the national organization. Mr. Edward Hawley. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Hawley:

Today your daily newspaper brought you a news story from Amsterdam where the World Council of Churches is holding its first meeting. Every day for the past ten days, you and millions of others of fifty different countries have been told by your newspapers of this meeting—one of the most newsworthy events of the life of the Christian Church in this century. There is a story behind the headlines.

Kathryn Kline, chairman of the United Christian Youth Move-

ment, which is meeting here this week at Grand Rapids, is not with us because she is among the 150 youth delegates to the meeting in Amsterdam. Later, she will represent us at the meeting of the Youth Department of the New World Council, which will plan cooperative youth activities on a world scale—a new opportunity for youth never available before.

This Department springs from another world-wide meeting held last summer, the Second World Conference of Christian Youth in Oslo, Norway. I was a member of America's delegation. There, 1,300 of us from 71 different countries met to proclaim Christ's lordship and tried to understand each other, and our jobs as Christians.

Young people came from Germany and the nations that Germany had occupied. Youths from the Netherlands and from Indonesia met with us on the very day that last summer's Indonesian fighting broke out.

We came from both sides of the Iron Curtain, though the Soviet Union itself was not represented.

I wish I had time to tell of the meetings between these many groups which helped us to understand that we held a common loyalty that transcended our differences.

The fact that such a meeting could be held at all in these times

indicates to me that the Church is not failing completely to meet the needs of youth.

The young person today who wants to find international fellowship, will find in the Christian Church the most widespread world-wide organization that as an ordinary citizen may join.

I have a British friend, Pen Jones, a daily chairman at Oslo who found that the symbol of the cross was able to make friends for him even in Soviet Russia on a post-war visit to that country. The church is increasingly becoming *one* church in fellowship.

The World Council meeting today embrace Orthodox, Protestant, and Anglo-Catholic Christians. About 20 Roman Catholics came to Oslo in Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. delegations.

In France, last summer, a Roman Catholic theological professor told me how happy he was that there were Roman Catholics at Oslo, because he shared our hope that good Protestant Christians and good Catholic Christians might cease to look at each other only through the eyes of prejudice.

The movement toward Christian unity, today only at its feeble beginnings, in itself is a great service to youth, for it provides one of the best hopes for world peace possible. (*Applause.*)

Miss Storen mentions that the church needs to provide youth

with opportunities to follow Christ in serving others. I have just come from a church youth work camp at Hughson, California, where small groups of Congregational young people, aided almost every evening by local Christians of many different denominations, have been picking and drying surplus apricots and peaches to go to Europe for Church World Service. Food that would otherwise go to waste is being saved for the hungry because Christian youth care enough to give their time. (*Applause.*)

After the Oslo Conference last year, I spent several days at Le College Cevenol at the village of Le Chambon in the South France. There, young people from nine nations were at work putting up buildings for a Protestant school. Roman Catholics and Protestants, miners and students, worked side by side so that the college could continue to provide a Christian education for students from all over Europe.

This year there are at least ten such work camps scattered over the European continent. Over 3,000 American young people have been involved in such projects here and abroad and youth in your town and mine engage in this same sort of service through collection of clothing, food, and money for overseas relief.

The church is not failing to provide youth with the chance to

serve. Then, finally and most important, the church is changing the lives of young people through effectively presenting the Gospel. Though this happens in many ways, most important I think is the summer conference or church camp. I doubt that there is a single town or city where this broadcast is being heard that has not had at least one young person in summer conference this year.

This summer I visited seven such conferences in five different states. Here youth are learning the church's message for all of life, as they live 24 hours a day as Christians, sharing work and play as well as worship; learning standards that can carry over into every aspect of daily life.

In classes, they become aware of the relation of the Gospel to social and economic problems and learn about the political education, labor relations, United Nations, race relations, and other seminars that the U. C. Y. M. and other church groups sponsor to help them act effectively as Christian citizens.

Often around a campfire on the last evening of a conference, I've heard halting but powerful testimonies about the power that has come into young lives in that week. These young people join literally millions of others to look back to some summer camp or conference in the past thirty years at which they accepted the faith that has

since been the framework for their lives. (*Applause.*)

Through such conferences and organizations, young people are daily being built into the world fellowship represented by the Oslo Conference, and more important, into the invisible fellowship of the everlasting Church of Christ. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Utley:

Thank you, Ed Hawley. Now, if you four speakers will join me up here right around the microphone, we'll give each one of you a chance to throw more light on this question before taking our questions direct from this young audience here in Grand Rapids.

Miss Storen, I suppose we might as well follow the "ladies first" principle, so I wonder if you, as the one lady in the group, would like to start the discussion? Have you a question for any one of the gentlemen?

Miss Storen: Yes, I'd like to ask Dr. Smith a question. I think he told so much about the various youth movements for school organizations. I wonder if he could tell us just how much the churches are doing with young people who do not go to school—those who leave high schools before they finish and those who do not go to college. How many conferences are provided for these students? (*Applause.*)

Dr. Smith: The general church

conferences which are held by various denominations and commissions seek to reach youth across the board—those who are in high school and those who have left high school and have gone to college. There are the opportunities in our summer camps for those who have not gone to colleges.

It is also true that there are special ministries which are being developed by our various denominations for the purpose of reaching young people who have gotten off into various working groups, whether in industry, or in migrant camps.

Mr. Utley: Thank you, very much, Mr. Smith. Now, I think Ed Hawley has a question that he wants to ask. Go ahead, Ed.

Mr. Hawley: I'd like to ask Gil Dodds if he feels that the churches that he has visited have really been a complete cross-section of the churches. I can't share his conviction that the local church is failing so badly. I think that a meeting like this indicates that the local churches somewhere are doing their job or a group like this would be impossible. (*Applause.*)

Gil Dodds: Mr. Hawley, it has been my privilege to visit churches from the West Coast to the East Coast, from up in Canada, down to Mexico. I have visited the small churches and the large churches and I am ashamed to say that o

churches, on the whole, have not been meeting the needs of our youth.

I believe you were referring also to the educational program. You will find that there are a few large churches in our various cities who have splendid educational

programs but I am afraid, in the vast majority of cases, you will have to say that there is inadequate preparation, inadequate training, and also inadequate schooling for teachers, Sunday School teachers, and many of the pastors as well. (*Applause.*)

THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

GILBERT LOTHAIK DODDS—Gil Dodds at the age of 30 successfully combines the profession of minister with the hobby of track. The son of a minister he was born in Norcatur, Kansas, but was brought up in several Mid-West towns where his father preached.

From very early boyhood, he had a desire to be a track star. In Falls City, Nebraska, where he attended high school, there was no track team or equipment, so he practiced by himself and earned money for the needed equipment. He worked as school janitor, and carried papers. He worked in a bakery, a library, and a greenhouse. By the end of his high school days, he had won all the ten official races he had entered and set five meet records.

Enrolling at Ashland College, Dodds kept up his track training along with his studies, and jobs which now included preaching. Following graduation from Ashland, he enrolled in the Gordon School of Theology and Missions in Boston. He also accepted the invitation of the Boston Athletic Association to race under its banner and be coached by its Jack Ryder. Winning races and breaking records, he became known as the "Flying Parson." In 1945, Mr. Dodds gave up track competition for a time to go into full-time gospel work with the Youth for Christ organization.

After receiving his Bachelor of Divinity degree, he entered Wheaton College for his Master's Degree. While there he re-entered track competition and is now head track coach at Wheaton.

Married and the father of two children, Mr. Dodds still engages in preaching while maintaining his place as an outstanding athlete.

LUTHER WESLEY SMITH—Dr. Smith is executive secretary of the Board of Education and Publication of the Northern Baptist Convention. He is also chairman of the Board of Trustees of the International Council of Religious Education.

Born in Melrose, Mass., in 1897, he was awarded his A.B. degree at Harvard, a B.D. at Newton Theological Institution, and a D.D. at Syracuse University. Dr. Smith has served as pastor of Baptist churches in Columbia, Missouri; and Syracuse, New York. He has also served as president of the Missouri Baptist Ministers' Conference, and, since 1938, as executive secretary of the American Baptist Publishing Society.

Dr. Smith is the author of *And So I Preached This*, and is well known for his radio talks on religious subjects.

HELEN F. STOREN—Miss Storen, an assistant professor of education at Queens College, New York, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Educational Commission of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. She is a member of the Corpus Christi Church Youth Forums in New York.

EDWARD HAWLEY—A student at Chicago Theological Seminary, Edward Hawley is a former president of the National Pilgrim Fellowship, a national youth organization of the Congregational Christian Churches. Mr. Hawley spent two years in England as a special consultant to the youth department of the English Congregational Churches.

CLIFTON UTLEY — Mr. Utley, a radio commentator and an analyst on foreign affairs, is a trustee of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago. A native of Chicago, Mr. Utley received his Ph.B. degree from the University of Munich and at the University of Algiers. While going to college, he was also a newspaper reporter.

From 1928 to 1930, Mr. Utley was a research assistant at the University of Chicago. In 1930, he became editor of *Foreign Notes* published by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations of which he was director for a number of years. Mr. Utley was also a member of the editorial staff of the *Chicago Sun*.

Mr. Hawley: While I agree with Mr. Dodds that we need a diversified ministry and specialists in many fields, I think there should be credit given also to the many ministers in rural parishes around this country who are doing the collective job that he speaks about—being specialists in many different fields—and are doing an effective job in education programs in some of our smallest communities and even out in the open countryside. They should be included along with his city churches as churches that are doing the job. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, very much, Ed Hawley and Gil Dodds. Now, some of you may have heard Gil Dodds say beside the microphone to me here now, "Do I get a chance to ask any?" You certainly do, Gil. Go ahead.

Mr. Dodds: I'm really not trying to get back on Mr. Hawley, but there's one thing I would like to ask. He said that the young people are getting training in summer conferences. Mr. Hawley, I'd like to ask if you feel that this training the young people are getting for a brief week or two during the summer is enough to carry them through for the rest of the year until they come back to summer conferences the next year?

Mr. Hawley: No, it most emphatically is not, but there are two things I'd like to say to that. First, it's amazing how much just one

week in summer conferences we do to young people from a church that is otherwise almost dead. (*Applause.*)

I have visited groups in England—if I may jump out of the country for a moment—who haven't had a pastor for two years where an active youth program is still carrying on because young people have been to summer conferences and have received inspirations there.

Then I would like to say that many of our churches are carrying on non-conference follow-up programs in which young people come back into and to put their summer conference idealism into practice.

Mr. Utley: Thanks, Ed. Now Gil Dodds and Helen Storen both say that they have additional questions they want to ask.

Miss Storen: I'd like to know why the youth conference and the inspiration they get there doesn't carry over better into married life. It seems to me that many young people after they get married completely forget about their church and their church affiliation. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thanks a lot. I'm sorry we won't have time for your question right now, Gil Dodds, but I'll tell you how to do it. Bootleg your question indirectly to somebody's question from the floor afterwards and that way you can get it in.

QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

Mr. Utley: Tonight the accent is really on youth and religion, too, for our audience of more than 5,000 people, many of them delegates of the Christian Youth Conference meeting here in Grand Rapids this week, are more than a little anxious to quiz the speakers.

Man: I'd like to address a question to Miss Storen. Don't you believe that the church is failing the family rather than just the youth? I believe that a youth properly trained would turn without question to the church in time of need or trouble.

Miss Storen: Yes, I do. In fact, I left some of that out of my speech because of time. I think churches should provide more worship service and other activities where families can participate as groups rather than having their activities all on age levels. I think they need to provide, as I said before, counseling services for married people. The emphasis needs to be definitely upon the family. *(Applause.)*

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Helen Storen. You in about the sixth row there with the red tie.

Man: I'd like to ask Dr. Smith if the church is really not failing youth, why is it that there hasn't been a general church movement, of the people of the churches, that is, to express objection to the

recent Supreme Court decision on religious education?

Dr. Smith: The main reason, in my judgment, is because the statement by the Supreme Court left the matter rather confused. It was confused by the word of the judges themselves. You will discover if you will read that statement given by the Supreme Court that four of the judges dissented and there were several minority opinions expressed. The fact of the matter is that many of the people are seriously confused about what the Supreme Court really did mean when it gave its judgment.

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Dr. Smith. Now we'll go upstairs to the balcony.

Man: I'd like to address this question to Miss Storen. How can we teach religion in our public schools without prejudicing children for or against one denomination or one religion?

Miss Storen: I think we cannot teach religion. We can teach *about* religion and some schools are doing it quite successfully, although, as you may know, it is not permitted many places. But we teach them the history of religion; we teach them to understand about the various religions in their communities, to make them intelligent about the beliefs of others

and this promotes much better inter-faith understanding. Not to teach a particular faith, but to teach about religions, their origins and their current beliefs. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, very much, Helen Storen. Now the gentleman here.

Man: I'd like to address my question to Mr. Hawley. Must not the church itself take a clearer stand against war and social injustices if it is to meet the needs of youth today? (*Applause.*)

Mr. Hawley: The church must certainly make a sincere effort to present the gospel message about social issues and particularly about the issue of war. The issue of war, however, is one upon which the church must sincerely seek to express its total conscience and the concern of all Christians about war, and we must recognize that we find sincere Christians with different attitudes towards the ultimate question of participation in war.

Mr. Utley: Thanks, Ed Hawley. Now the young man in gray.

Man: I'd like to ask a question of Mr. Dodds. Why has the church such a lack of volunteer lay leadership for young people when thousands of today's adults are products of yesterday's youth program? (*Applause.*)

Mr. Dodds: I think that you will find that many of the adults

today were brought up on pragmatism of Dewey and various philosophies which have turned the young people entirely away from the church rather than directing them to the church.

Mr. Utley: Helen Storen was a chance to answer that one, I

Miss Storen: I will disagree with my colleague now. I don't think we can blame everything on the so-called progressive education. (*Applause.*) I think it has done more to make students more critical and more intelligent about their religious beliefs.

I also feel that the direction we're going now in education is not to the extreme that for awhile some people went in their interpretation, but we are directing education toward spiritual and moral values. I believe we will feel the effect in the graduates of the future. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Dodds: Thank you, very much. I think I should clarify my issue when I said Dewey. The question was asked about those of the present generation who are fathers and mothers. We must go back to the beginning of pragmatism and that fact, and when Dewey came forth, I believe if you will study his philosophy entirely you will find that he really has no belief whatsoever in God. I believe for an individual to have a well-founded, well-grounded life he must have a definite belief

God and in His Son Jesus Christ.
(*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Helen Storen says that she does, too, but we'll let her answer another question later.

Man: I have a question I would like to ask Dr. Smith. What, besides summer camps and conferences, do you recommend as a remedy for the church's failure to its youth?

Dr. Smith: Well, in the first place, I don't agree with the statement, or the implication, that the church has failed its youth. I do not think that it's done all it can do and all that it ought to do, but I have tried to point out that I believe that the church is doing a very significant and effective job in giving leadership to its youth and, through its youth, in giving leadership to Christian concepts in our time and day. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Dr. Smith. Now the young red-headed girl down here.

Lady: I'd like to ask Mr. Gil Dodds how can we combat the complacency of church leaders on the practicing of practical Christianity on social and political issues?

Mr. Dodds: Could you clarify your statement, the last part, just a little more?

Lady: Well, I mean, church leaders, when you ask about going into politics they say, "Oh, no,

stay away from politics, that's dirty."

Mr. Dodds: I, as an athlete, believe that a Christian should seek to engage in various other avenues of religious practice and in living a Christian life. I find that I can be as good a Christian and have much more effect some ways in the athletic circles than I can behind the pulpit. I think we as young people should seek to witness for Christ, not only in the pulpit, in the Church, and as a missionary, but we should seek to witness for Christ in our daily activities in school and every way that we can. (*Applause.*) I think you can be a good Christian politician and be a top politician at the same time. (*Cheers and applause.*)

Lady: I would like to address my question to Dr. Smith. Should not the church show the youth the importance of thinking and acting peace and thus take a stand against military conscription? (*Applause.*)

Dr. Smith: I think that Mr. Hawley has expressed my own conviction and the proper answer. I believe the church should find the opportunity for expressing the total convictions and conscience of their respective constituencies. There are differing ideas and convictions concerning this particular issue, and I believe that just as in the recent national conventions of many of our denominations, so always and everywhere there should be the opportunity to

encourage expression of the convictions and conscience of our people. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Dr. Smith. Now the gentleman way over at the extreme right.

Man: You want higher educational standards for ministers and yet you say that progressive education is destroying the effectiveness of the church. Are modern educational methods entirely bad? This is for Mr. Dodds.

Mr. Dodds: I did not say modern education as a whole was entirely bad, but I do believe that any education, as we do find in many of our public schools, which denies Jesus Christ as the son of God is an education that is to be shunned and I do not believe it is the education that should be taught to our youth of today. In fact, I would not want my son or daughter to be taught that type of education today. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Now right down in the front row here.

Man: Mr. Hawley, do these conferences which you mentioned fit the needs of all youth? I believe that they fit those of only a select church minority. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Hawley: Yes. I think that you have a well taken point there. However, it must be considered that we have to devise ways of first getting people who are not in that church youth minority to

come to a summer conference all.

Then, secondly, I think there are significant movements in the world, particularly the Jocist movement in the Roman Catholic Church and the Christian Work League in the Church of Scotland that are really trying to reach young Christians and young Christian workers and to bring them into the fellowship that we find.

Mr. Utley: I think everybody on the platform wants to take a shot at answering that question. You were first, Dr. Smith.

Dr. Smith: The point is that a number of questions have seemed to assume that because we have laid emphasis upon summer camps, programs, work camps, and all the like, that we are not keeping our mind and we are not having a total program for the youth of our church and our local communities the year round.

I would point out that our church is serving youth in Christian ways constantly. For example, take the great 4-H Club movement in America, which is one of the great youth movements of our time in our land. The leaders in Wisconsin, for example, tell us that almost invariably the leaders of the 4-H Clubs in their local communities are those who have received their inspiration and their training in their local churches. We're not failing the youth

our local churches just because we haven't emphasized that part of the program. (*Applause.*)

Miss Storen: I think there are select groups that are getting much more of it than others. I don't believe that in the cities, in certain sections of the cities, students get very much, and in certain sections of our country. In some sections they get much more than others, and I think we have to think, in addition to these youth groups, in terms of what the local parish can do right in its own community. It does not do nearly enough.

Mr. Dodds: All right. I'd just like to ask Mr. Hawley or Mr. Smith. They've been giving very fantastic figures as far as I'm concerned. I'm always skeptical of five thousand, or two million, and those type of figures, and I'm just wondering, gentlemen, if you can give me and the audience here some adequate proof that there are a given number of these five thousand, or two million that you have been referring to through your speech and in answering questions that have had a definite relationship with Christ, have gone definitely back into their home, have rejuvenated their church in some extent or other. I want something more specific than just figures. (*Applause.*)

Dr. Smith: Thank you. That's a good question. First of all, may I say that the figures I have

quoted are upwards of two millions that are in the various summer camps and assemblies under direct or indirect Christian auspices. I'd be very glad to point out that, whether in summer camps or whether in great conferences like this, there have been those results to which Gil Dodds refers.

I've already referred to Dick and Ann Beers who have given their lives. I could refer to Lawrence Knox who is over there now in Christian work in Shanghai University. I could refer to churches in one state after the other where there are individual churches where the whole life has been revamped and transformed because the youth in these various camps and assemblies have had a new and vital experience with Christ in their lives. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Dr. Smith. Gil Dodds has some more remarks to make on that, but he says he'll wait until somebody else has a chance to answer a question. Yes, you, sir, on the aisle.

Man: I would like to ask this question of Miss Storen. Is the church demanding enough of its members in order to make their faith vital today?

Miss Storen: No, I don't think it is, and I think that we have not had nearly enough lay activity in all of the churches, Catholic and Protestant alike. We should not leave everything to the ministers,

but we should have much more vital lay action. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Helen Storen. Now, on the right aisle.

Lady: Mr. Smith. If the church is not failing youth, why is there such a low standard of moral standards among young people?

Dr. Smith: One of the important facts which we have to face is that there have been world tides of materialism and secularism that have washed in upon the shores of every nation since World War I. These world tides of secularism have threatened to engulf the whole life of civilization.

In Germany, that flood expressed itself in Nazism; in Russia, in atheistic communism; in America, in moral deterioration and spiritual apathy, and therefore, the church in the face of these incoming world tides of secularism and paganism seems to be puny and ineffective. But the question I would ask in response is this: What if the church had not been teaching and lecturing the knowledge and love and faith of Christ and Christian purposes in the hearts of American youth and in the hearts of British youth in these past years? What would have happened to our civilization now? (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Dr. Smith. I see here in the audience the second from the aisle about ten rows back a delegate who I

think is a delegate from India. Madam, I wonder if we could have your question?

Lady: I'm from Bombay, India and I'd like to ask this question from Mr. Smith. What have the churches done to improve the racial prejudice in this country when schools and churches are separate from whites and Negroes and the contacts between the two are minimum. (*Cheers and applause.*)

Dr. Smith: The answer is that in innumerable Christian youth groups across this country, in one community after the other, on one campus after the other, those voices and that conscience that lifted up against the very wrongs of which you speak are those that come from these groups. The question I would like to ask in the face of it is—where do you find the same conscience, the same idealism, the same determination to do away with these evils as you find in our Christian youth groups across the country. This is the way in which the church is trying to meet the problem. (*Applause.*)

Miss Storen: I think that the great impetus for intercultural education came, sad to say, from the secular groups. Churches are working along that line now, but we were silent too long. (*Shouts.*)

Mr. Utley: I wish we could go on with these questions indefinitely. Unfortunately, we cannot.

Now for the summaries of the

night's discussion, here is Mr. Hawley.

Mr. Hawley: Dr. Smith and I have not tried to give the impression tonight that every church is meeting the needs of all the youth in his community, but we insist that it is not failing in its major task.

This summer, we remind you again, more than two million young people in summer conferences have heard the Christian message. New and exciting opportunities for service are being offered at home and abroad, and through conferences in Oslo and Amsterdam, and now here in Grand Rapids, the church is building a world fellowship of Christian youth—one of our best hopes for peace and the fulfillment of God's will on earth. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Ed Hawley. Now Gil Dodds.

Gil Dodds: I have faith in the young people of America. We would like to have the church, however, provide more leaders to carry the great and varied task before us—leaders with the best in educational fitness and leaders we won't have to be educationally ashamed of. We would like to have the church minister to our whole life, rather than just to one segment; to reaffirm in the field of secular education the vital supremacy of spiritual values over economic and material values.

We would like to have a clear ringing challenge inspiring us to accept the Christ on the Cross as our Saviour from sin, and to dedicate whatever we have to full-time Christian service. We ask that the Church realize its necessity in our lives and meet it. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Gil Dodds. Next, Dr. Luther Wesley Smith.

Dr. Smith: We are prone to judge the Church against the standard of perfection. In 1800, the Church, according to Dr. Latoreta Gale, reached one in 14 of the populace. Today she reaches almost one out of every two. So long as the church can produce, in one place, 5,000 representative, earnest youth seeking God's will, like this company before me, and so long as it produces Gil Dodds and Helen Storen and a host of other youth leaders devoted to Christ, who feel within them the stirring of divine discontent with things as they are, and with the church as it is, the church cannot be said to have failed. Rather, with her youth, she is on the march! (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Dr. Smith. At this time, it's ladies last. Miss Helen Storen may we hear you, the final summary of the evening?

Miss Storen: Speaking at a Catholic Action Conference last week, Father Daniel Lawrence stated that materialism and pagan-

ism have caused stagnation in Catholic action and thinking. The same can be said of other Christian denominations.

To revitalize religion the church must provide a higher quality of religious instruction for youth, must provide more opportunity for service, and take more vigorous positions on issues which effect the social welfare of mankind.

If the Church is to follow Christ's precepts of going into the market place, she cannot be silent on such needed reforms as fairness to minority groups, improvement of conditions of labor, better housing, and all aspects of social justice, which will help raise man to the dignity that God intended him.

A true crusade on the part of all our churches for a nobler world might waken youth out of his apathy. Youth is ready for a tough and exciting job other than war. Why don't we give it to them? (*Applause.*)

Mr. Utley: Thank you, Helen Storen, Dr. Smith, Gil Dodds and Ed Hawley. Our sincere thanks to our host, the Christian Youth Conference of North America, and station WLAV in Grand Rapids. We are also deeply grateful to Dennis Savage, director of the conference, Dr. Isaac Beckes, executive secretary of the United Christian Youth Movement, and to H.

M. Steed, station manager of station WLAV for their assistance in presenting this program.

As we announced earlier, your Town Meeting will come to next week from Youngstown, Ohio, when we'll be the guests of the *Youngstown Vindicator* and station WFMJ—our subject: "The Congressional Spy Investigations Serving the National Interest?"

Our speakers for the affirmative will be Senator Homer Ferguson, Republican from Michigan and Chairman of the Senate Investigating Committee; and Congressman Karl E. Mundt, Republican from South Dakota, co-sponsor of the Mundt-Nixon Bill and member of the House Un-American Activities Committee. The negative will be argued by Senator J. Howard McGrath, Democrat of Rhode Island and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and Jonathan Daniels, editor of the *Raleigh News and Observer*, former administrative assistant to President Roosevelt and currently, a member of the Public Advisory Board of the ECA.

Your guest moderator will be Houston Peterson, author, lecturer and professor at Rutgers University. So plan to be with us on Tuesday and every Tuesday at the sound of the Crier's Bell. (*Applause.*)